

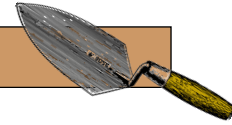


# Appleby Archaeology Newsletter



Volume 19 Issue 3

Autumn 2016



## REMINDER

This years autumn lectures are being held on the second Thursday of each month at 7.30pm in the Appleby Supper Room



Appleby Archaeology Group



## Dig Appleby - Breaking the Ground



DigAppleby got off to a splendid start on 8<sup>th</sup> July when around 30 volunteers signed up for duty at the Launch Meeting in the Market Hall's Supper Room. Since then, many more people have come forward to offer their gardens for "archaeological investigation" or to enrol on our various training events.

We chose the allotment area behind St Anne's Alms-houses for our first foray. This is a large, open, grassed area that had the advantage that we could spread ourselves about without bothering anybody.

Moreover it was thought that, given the nature of its historical use, there was a good chance that deeply-buried medieval remains might remain undisturbed.

The first weekend saw volunteers producing detailed geophysical and topographic surveys of the site. We used both earth resistivity and magnetometry surveying equipment. This sounds rather technical but was actually very easy to operate and, once the results had been fed into Martin Railton's computer, our first peek into Appleby's past was quickly revealed. After due consideration of the results, two test-pit sites were selected and a second weekend session was scheduled.

There was no shortage of volunteers and, further encouraged by some excellent weather (the Alms-houses really are a delightful place to work) the pits were duly dug and our first finds began to appear.



**Digging the allotment!**

The first pit revealed a crude cobbled surface, identical to one found previously at the top of Boroughgate and which we believe to be medieval in date.

## Contents

Page 2:	<i>Transcribing Documents, A walk through Brough</i>
Page 3:	<i>Romans and Britons</i>
Page 4:	<i>Autumn lectures</i>



Fragments of pottery were recovered including some medieval pottery, and later wares, also some hand-made nails, some animal bone and glass. In the second test pit we found a deep deposit of rubble. Associated finds indicated this was 19th century and we believe that this is probably the demolished remains of a building shown in this location on the 1861 Ordnance Survey map. This confirmed the results of the geophysical survey, which indicated the presence of a high-resistance area.

More test pit excavations are planned when we embark upon our "Big Dig weekend" between Friday end of 16<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> September. See [applebyarchaeology.org.uk/digapplebyblog](http://applebyarchaeology.org.uk/digapplebyblog) for details.

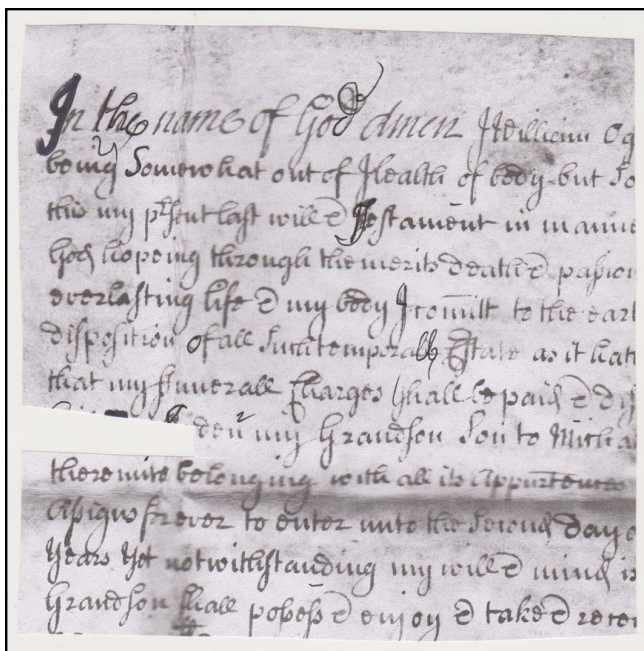
Elsewhere, and specially tailored for armchair archaeologists, we held a training session to provide an introduction to the arcane art of medieval document transcription. This proved so popular that we had to schedule a second session. The documents proved to be remarkably tricky to decipher and some of us came away with severe headaches and a renewed interest in the delights of using trowels .. but it was all very interesting and gave a surprising insight into the medieval mind.

There's still a long way to go, of course, before we get anywhere near the objectives we have set for DigAppleby, but we feel we have made a jolly good start!

**Martin Joyce**

### Transcribing Documents - the beginning!

Twelve brave souls decided to do some training and have a go at reading and transcribing some very old documents as part of our Dig Appleby project. Most did not know what to expect but rose to the challenge and all enjoyed the sessions – even though it was not as straight forward as some had imagined and it initially



appeared quite daunting; it was definitely a day for head-scratching and for being prepared to interpret some rather bizarre spellings....

Many of the documents were from the 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and the range and style of handwriting was quirky to say the least – it became clear that some words jumped out as being easily read while others left everyone baffled. People were introduced to some basic abbreviations and symbols used by the scribes, odd-looking capital letters, unusual or non-existent punctuation and elaborate curves designed to confuse readers into thinking they were actual words. The example gives you an idea of what we were up against.

At first there were more gaps and omissions than transcribed words but by the end of each session people were beginning to "get their eye" in and began to make sense of what they were reading. Despite going home with a headache at the end, several keen participants are doing another training session where they will get seriously to grips with an Indenture from the 1500s!

Many thanks to Phyl for her hospitality and for the loan of her dining room table.

**Carol Dougherty**

### A walk around Brough

Since it was bypassed in 1977, Brough has become somewhere you really only notice out of the corner of your eye as you hurtle past on your way to somewhere else.



### A fort and a castle

But as you drive on, you're certain to note the dramatic limestone escarpments rising behind the town and the picturesque remains of a castle opposite. Together they suggest that Brough might well be a place worth getting to know a bit better. When Appleby Archaeology paid a visit to the town for the second of its Summer Evening walks back in June, it very quickly became

Our tour began near the castle on the village green in Church Brough. Margaret Gowling, our excellent guide, explained that this was the earliest part of the settlement and that it first came to prominence when the Romans established a large fort here. The site seems to have continued in use into the medieval period because the Normans then found it convenient to build a keep and bailey within the old Roman defences.

Though the remains of their work are now in a ruinous state, enough survives to provide a vivid impression of the ambitious scale of the development. ... Something like this perhaps:



Perched romantically above a precipitous drop down to the Swindale Beck, a village green flanked by housing links the castle to a long, low church (possessing a singularly beautiful Norman doorway).

Margaret explained how Church Brough subsequently spawned outlying settlements first at Brough Sowerby and then, and more significantly at Market Brough, a little further up the Swindale Beck.

So our party now moved on to explore the nooks and crannies of Market Brough itself - a once-thriving coaching town astride the busy A66. Margaret told us that the market at Market Brough had struggled to compete with Kirby Stephen, but that this deficiency had been remedied by a surprising range of industrial activities. The Swindale Beck provided ample power for numerous water wheels and the remains of several large mills and warehouses demonstrated how active and enterprising the town must once have been.

So, in short, there was indeed much more to Brough than most of us had ever imagined and we all agreed that we were very glad we'd come.

Our thanks to Margaret Gowling (author of a history of Brough) for giving up her evening and showing us around.

**Martin Joyce**

## Romans & Britons

Jamie Quartermain Senior Project Manager with Oxford Archaeology North attracted a good turnout at the February meeting of Appleby Archaeology when he spoke on the Roman Occupiers & their Relationship with Native Britons in the North West.

Traditional views of native life in Romanised settle-

ments have recently been questioned. Recent archaeology suggests that the physical remains and material culture of the period is similar to that of the preceding Iron Age. In his talk he outlined the results of some recent excavations in the North West which have benefited from radiocarbon dating and detailed analysis, identifying changes over the period of the occupation. Using evidence from this work, Jamie described life before, during and after the Roman Occupation.

A deterioration in the climate during the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age (1250 BC - c800 BC) led to a decrease in food production and in combination with an increasing population, encouraged native Britons to build defensive structures protecting their settlements. Examples include defensive ditches at Castle Crag, Ullswater, and in Glencoyne Park, Ullswater where there are upright stone walls around a settlement. Swords have been found in high status burials of this period and unlike bows, arrows and knives they have only one function, that of a weapon suggesting a time of instability.

Julius Caesar visited Britain in 55BC followed by Claudius in 43AD. Claudius invaded and then conquered the south and east of England where the distribution of villas and civilian towns suggest that the native population of the south and east adopted Roman ways with enthusiasm. Agricola extended Roman control to northern England between 70-80AD. While the remains of forts and their associated civilian settlements (vici) and roads are quite common in this region there are few villas, perhaps reflecting less stable conditions than in the south. Nevertheless a more settled period is supported by an Iron Age settlement on Askham Fell with an organised structure of round houses and animal stockades suggestive of Roman influence and little need for defensive structures.



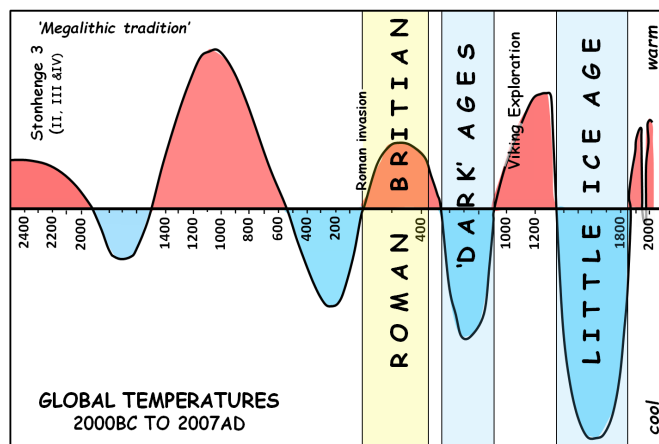
## Happy Romano-Britons

Research at several sites indicate their uses over many centuries and among those described were the following sites:



- a Romano British settlement in Thornton in Lonsdale, excavated in 2003 by members of the Archeology Group. Their results showed that the settlement predated the Romans. Charcoal from trenches across the ramparts gave carbon dates of 88-66BC and finds of several types of Roman pottery indicate continuous occupation of the enclosure from the late Iron Age to the later years of the Romano-British period. The early function of the site was stock management but there is evidence of metal-working in the Romano-British period. It would seem that the local farmers recognised the opportunity offered by Roman occupation and added an industrial element to their life.

- Ewanrigg near Maryport was in continuous use for 1400 years. The site, a double-ditched curvilinear enclosure with a funnel entrance (a banjo fort), was dated by pottery evidence to the fourth century AD. However, carbonised grain from a pit within the enclosure produced a calibrated radiocarbon date of 1410-1000 BC, indicating that the site had its origins in the Bronze Age. There are no signs that there were any Roman buildings within the enclosure.



### Climate change (*schematic*) versus culture change?

- At Walton Le Dale there is an extensive settlement dating from 70AD to the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. There, there are many industrial features, rectangular buildings and at the centre a round house. Roman coins and pottery were found. The site has been interpreted as a military run industrial production centre where the native population are likely to have worked.
- Excavation of a settlement at Barker Farm, within the complex of Lancaster University, revealed an Iron Age settlement of unenclosed round houses which may have lasted throughout the Roman occupation. There must have been contact with the Romans as the settlement was a short distance from the fort at Lancaster and near the junction of roads with the important road heading north (Galgate).
- A final reference was made to Southwaite Hillfort, Thirlmere where there is evidence that the ditch around the Iron Age hill fort was re-dug in the period 538-

678 AD suggesting that life became more unstable after the Romans departed with a renewed need for defensive structures.

In conclusion Jamie said it appeared the native Britons of the north were little influenced by Roman culture in spite of the military forts, vici and roadways. However the essentially rural population appears to have taken advantage of the opportunities offered by the Romans and peace and stability they brought.

The group thanked and warmly applauded Jamie for his very interesting talk and many used the opportunity to ask questions.

**Phyl Rouston**

## Autumn Lectures

### Mapping the Medieval Landscape of Cumbria

Dr. Caron Newman

(Newcastle University)

**Thursday 13th October**

Computerised GIS (graphical Information) Systems provide a powerful mechanism for visualising the way in which landscape features such as rural settlements and field systems develop over time. Dr Newman recently completed her Doctorate in the application of these techniques to the late medieval period in Cumbria and will bring us up to date on the use of these exciting technologies.

### Recent excavations at Vindolanda

Marta Alberti (Vindolanda Trust)

**Thursday 10th November**

Marta will first talk about the North-West quadrant of the last stone forts at Vindolanda, then review the 2016 excavation seasons, both inside and outside the stone forts. Concentrating on the latest developments within the South East quadrant of the last stone forts of Vindolanda, she will explore the ways in which the evidence uncovered can enrich our understanding of communities that populated the Northern Romano British frontier.

### Excavation of the Roman cemetery on Botchergate, Carlisle

Dr. Richard Newman (WA Archaeology)

**Thursday 8th December**

Botchergate forms the main thoroughfare into Carlisle from the south, and significant archaeological evidence has highlighted that the route served the same function during the Roman period. Excavations by Wardell Armstrong Archaeology in the William Street Carpark on Botchergate have revealed a well-preserved Roman cremation cemetery containing some of the best-preserved finds from the North of England.